

Press Release

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Governor Releases \$1.05 Million to Support Science and Technology Programs

Governor Tucker today announced the release of \$1.05 million in appropriations from the General Improvement Fund to support the programs of the Arkansas Science & Technology Authority. The announcement came as Governor Tucker joined the Board of Directors and Staff of the Authority at the State Capitol Building to mark the agency's tenth year anniversary.

"In its ten years of existence", he said, "the Authority has invested over \$11.5 million in the State's science and technology apparatus". Of that, the Authority has granted nearly \$4.25 million to universities for basic and applied research; \$1.65 million to the State's Centers for Applied Technology; and \$1.5 million invested in direct job creation. Governor Tucker congratulated the Arkansas Science & Technology Authority for its efforts in these areas and reaffirmed the State's commitment to supporting the programs that have helped bring the benefits of science and technology to the people of Arkansas.

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Evidence of that support was today's release of \$450,000 for each of two years to help support the National Science Foundation (NSF) EPSCoR Program, and \$75,000 for each of two years to help support the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) Arkansas Space Grant Consortium, for a total of \$1.05 million over the next two years.

Through the NSF EPSCoR Program, the Centers for Applied Technology were established in 1989 to encourage collaborations between institutions of higher-learning and private enterprises. The collaborations are intended to speed the discovery, development and application of new technology. Through the NASA EPSCoR Program, the Arkansas Science & Technology Authority established the Arkansas Space Grant Consortium, a training grant program initiated to educate and familiarize faculty and students with aerospace fundamentals and NASA's research programs. Through the EPSCoR program, ASTA has provided matching funds to establish a total of four research and technology centers: the Center for Protein Dynamics at the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville; the Arkansas Neurobiology Research Center at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences; the Center for Cellular and Molecular Studies on Biological Aging at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences; and the Center for Material Handling at the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville.

Referring to state allocations for these programs, Governor Tucker said, "I believe the State gets back far more than what we put into these programs". In citing the Authority's Seed Capital Investment Program as one example, he said, "That program has created 264 jobs and has generated seven hundred thousand additional dollars since its inception, that's a wonderful score". He added that he hoped State support of these programs would build a public knowledge about the Arkansas Science & Technology Authority and the role it plays in Arkansas' economic development.

John W. Ahlen, the President of the Authority, said that new program thrusts will be in technology development and manufacturing modernization. Governor Tucker recently signed an agreement with NASA's Marshall Space Flight Center, indicating a move in that direction. In addition, Dr. Ahlen said that the Authority is working on a communications plan to help in marketing its services to its customers, particularly Arkansas' small and medium - sized businesses and industries.

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The Arkansas Science & Technology Authority serves as a statewide funding resource for high quality scientific and technological projects. The Authority endeavors to bring the benefits of science and technology to the people and state of Arkansas through scientific research, technological development, business innovation, and education.